

French at Oxford

Current Students

[Undergraduate](#)

[Graduate](#)

Prospective Students

[Undergraduate](#)

[Graduate](#)

Other Information

[Teaching Staff](#)

[Related Web Sites](#)

[Research](#)

Navigation

[French Homepage](#)

[Faculty Homepage](#)

Welcome!

Oxford's French department is the biggest in Britain, with 31 permanent members of staff covering all areas of French literature and language. The quality and range of the department's research was recognised in the award of the top-ranking 5* grade in the 2001 national Research Assessment Exercise.

We have an intake of about 200 students a year. Our course reflects the diversity and richness of both the language and the culture of France, which has been one of the most influential nations in the world. Its impact in numerous areas, ranging from gastronomy to science, has been huge, and its literature has influenced numerous others, including English (Shakespeare read the essayist Montaigne; the nineteenth-century novelist George Eliot took her pen-name George as a tribute to France's most famous woman writer of the time, George Sand).

France produced, in the eighteenth century, four great political thinkers (Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and Montesquieu) whose ideas shaped the modern political outlook of Northern Europe and the United States of America. It was the home of Impressionism, and it was to Paris that painters flocked in the early twentieth century from all over Europe to practise their art and to share ideas that led, for example, to Cubism. The cinema was invented in France in the nineteenth century (the first ever public film screening took place in Paris in 1895).

We train all students thoroughly in the language all through the course, and offer papers for those whose particular interest is in Linguistics; our core first-year course introduces you to the complete range of French literature, and if you want to study French on its own, you can take a French cinema paper in your first year (those studying French in combination with another language or subject can do our European Cinema paper a little later in the course).

You can also, if studying French on its own, take a first-year paper in French thought, which will introduce you to the sheer intellectual strength (both past and continuing) of this culture. In your second and final years, whether studying French on its own or with another language or subject, you can take a paper in Literature and the Visual Arts, and our very flexible course allows you to make a specialist study of the greatest French writers, from Rabelais to Proust, as well as choosing particular centuries for wider-ranging study.

